



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
The Secretary of Commerce  
Washington, D.C. 20230

May 25, 2010

The Honorable Haley Barbour  
Governor of Mississippi  
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Governor Barbour:

Thank you for your letter of April 30, 2010, requesting a commercial fishery failure determination in the State of Mississippi due to the Deepwater Horizon rig explosion and oil spill.

Recognizing the enormity of adverse effects of this oil spill causing large areas of Federal and some State waters to be closed to all fishing in order to protect human health and the marine environment, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has made a positive commercial fishery failure determination under section 312(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. I am declaring a fishery resource disaster for affected fisheries in waters off Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

We are making this determination in order to recognize the damage to marine fisheries and associated economic hardship on affected fishermen and dependent businesses. This disaster determination will help ensure that the Federal Government is in a position to mobilize the range of assistance that Mississippi fishermen and fishing communities may need.

We all recognize the financial hardship that this spill has caused for commercial and recreational fishermen and businesses that are dependent on those fisheries. BP—as a responsible party—can and must pay the costs. Thus far it has paid \$27.8 million on 23,451 total claims. I pledge that NMFS will work with the State of Mississippi to address issues within the affected fishing communities.

Further, the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA)—in close coordination with NOAA—has been in the Gulf Coast region, meeting with the economic development practitioner community to assess the potential economic implications and effects from the spill. Once the economic impacts are known, EDA stands ready to respond with whatever resources are available with its traditional suite of economic development programs and tools.

If you have further questions, please contact April Boyd, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

Gary Locke